THE CALL OF JESUS TO JOY

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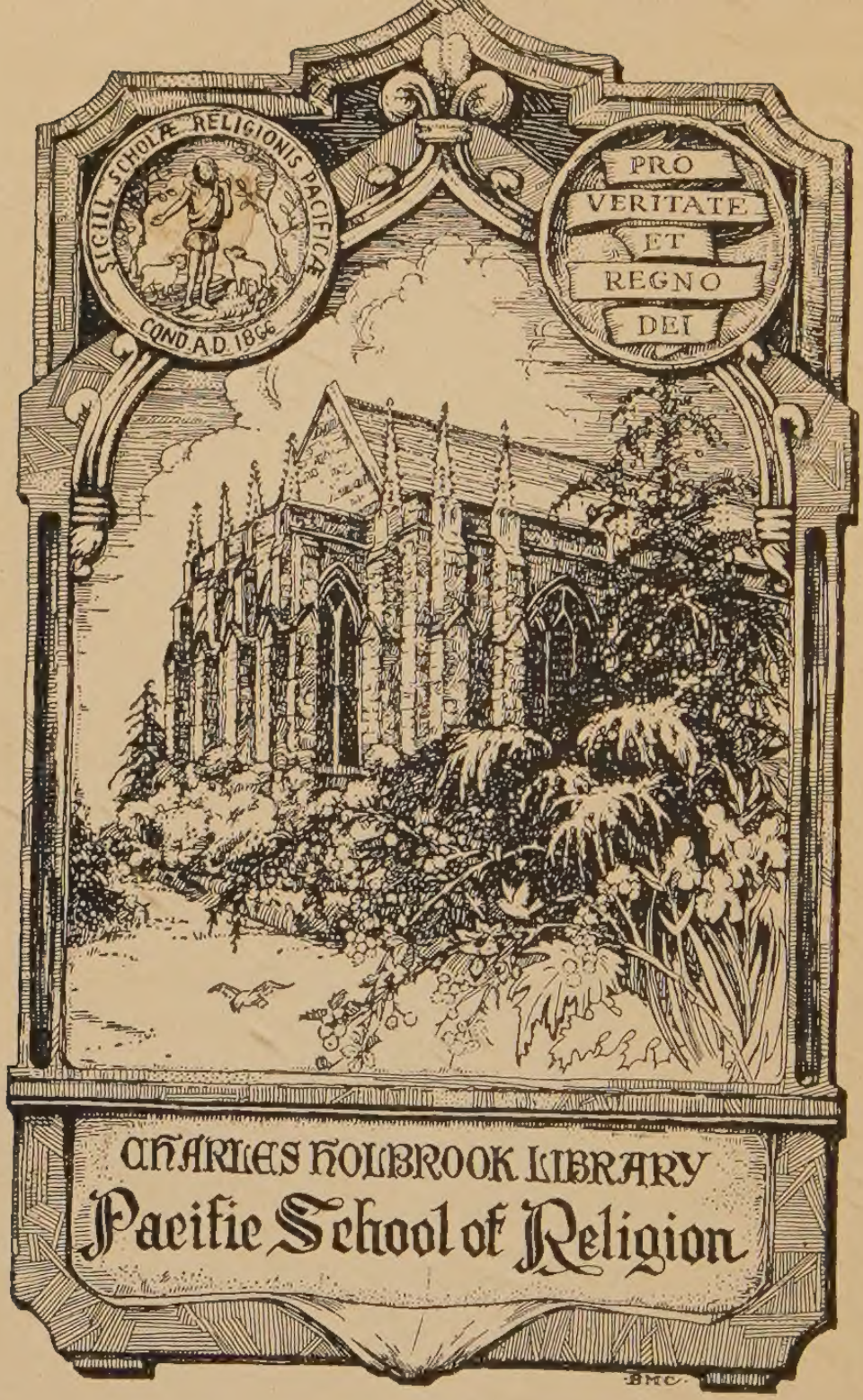

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THE CALL OF JESUS TO JOY

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BY

WILLIAM ELLIOT GRIFFIS, D.D.
Author of "Christ the Creator of the New Japan," "The Lily Among Thorns," "Sunny Memories of Three Pastorates," etc.

"That they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves."—*Jesus.*

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To Her
who first interpreted to me
INFINITE LOVE
and who, in alluring her boy to
say from the heart
"Lord, I make a full surrender;
Every power and thought be thine,"
opened to me life's pathway of joy.

I

THE DUTY OF JOY

I

THE DUTY OF JOY

IT is a good start in life to realize that God "formed the earth to be inhabited." He "giveth us all things richly to enjoy." In the oldest and best book of delights, the Bible, the duty of happiness and the fine art of attaining it are both made plain. On its pages we are challenged to a happy life. Many are the messages of Jesus, but the burden of them all is joy.

There are other purposes in our creation, indeed, but one great design of Our Father is that we shall know the joy of living. The proof

of this is in every detail of the divine government. Even more, we have the inspiration from Jesus himself, who was anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows. In his fellowship we belong, when we obey him. He tells us that his own joy is fulfilled in us.

Now, there are a thousand ways of reaching joy—by work or rest, by traveling or staying at home, by solitude or society, by helping or being helped.

Yet, whether by muscle or mind, the senses or the soul, there is a time for everything. In the processes of life, the outer supply is fitted to the inner craving. The idea of enjoyment is a primal instinct. It is inborn of the lamb to frisk

and the child to play. The old stories of life and love, of ambition and war, of parenthood and striving for success, or victory over self and growth in character, are new to each generation.

How shall we find that continual happiness of which the Bible talks so much?

Ah! therein is highest art. To obtain joy we must not trust to animal instincts only. In this noblest of games there are rules. Leave it to one man's fancy only, even our own, and we play the part of Naaman. He thought—wrongly. Even the theologian, when egotistic, can caricature God, who is "the overflowing fountain of all good." Many a system of theology does

that, making children afraid of the dark and lining life's pathway with goblins, ghosts and specters. How can we cleanse our soul's dwelling-house of these legacies of heathenism? How rout these figments of superstition and live a life of joy?

No better way than to seek and walk daily with the Author and Giver of all things. "O, taste and see that the Lord is good." To learn how to be simple in tastes and thus, as by a sure path, discover the depths that lie in common things, is in itself a fine art. Such a delight is the superfine result of true soul-culture. The animal exhilaration of the child, in life outdoors, has its subtler counterpart in the trained soul who sees beyond the outer gar-

ment of things. Such an one has a ravishing sense of the Eternal Presence behind all.

In order to visualize such an idea, the incense, altar lights, music, vestments and the spiritual drama of the mass, concentrated within walls, are added to simple worship. By every attraction of sensuous forms of church service, some would attempt to realize the Unseen One, whose robe is the creation.

Yet the mystics require no cathedral. Plato, Paul, Wordsworth, Cowper, Shelley, Shakespeare, needed none. "The poet, tho he does not travel abroad, sees all the beautiful places." That is true, even in Japan, where it was said. Right training in the duty and fine

art of joy is a course in simplicity. Psalm LXXXI is at once an epic of delight and a receipt for joy.

Such self-culture will indispose us to run after the extraordinary, or get into that mob, in which each member chases his favorite fantom. It will be a perpetual antidote against the insanity of quest after riches, that makes so many lives joyless and wretched.

The kingdom of the unpossest for which we fret is never so rich as that we already have. Let us reckon up our assets—our personal gifts received from God by heredity, our wealth in love and friends and kind hearts, the environment in which we were born or live, the many persons and things in the world

that are willing to help us, if we are willing to let them. How much love, how many comforts, so great means of enjoyment prepared for us, even before we were born!

We can only appraise our assets by right thought. Perverse thinking will make fools of us all, or leave us in the doleful dumps. Very much as in the fairy tales, it is the kind of salve we put on our eyes that makes us see a palace or a hovel; gold, jewels and silken stuffs, or stones, dirt and rags.

To the growing soul, there are, with maturing life, deeps of joy and an ever increasing capacity for delight. Ever grander are the chords of happiness struck by experience—provided we keep near

the Author and Giver of all, who has more yet to bestow. "Experience worketh hope."

It is simple fact, absolute truth, verifiable science, that delighting oneself in the Lord means constant joy. As surely as Huyghens demonstrated the wave-theory, of which Marconi's wireless was but practical proof, so have the prophets, martyrs and common saints shown in their lives the truth of the psalm of delights. They have fulfilled the joy of Jesus. Even the Son of God in humanity did not disdain the motive of happiness. He "for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame." Surely, this is a challenge to us to do the same.

So ought we to learn that the daily cultivation of joy is both a duty and the best strengthener for life's burdens. It prepares us for whatever mortal existence may, and the eternities certainly will, bring us. Life is short, and affliction light. Joy is forever. He who is "made after the power of an endless life" teaches this.

II

OUR BIRTHDAYS

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OUR BIRTHDAYS

WE enter life from an ancestry ages upon ages long. Our heredity is as a church porch into the temple of the future and unknown. Our recurrent birthdays are entrances marked with both memory and hope.

The church porch! How beautiful to the eye, how sweet its associations! Carved with chisel work, it may be; pride of the architect; fulfilment of the grand design; addition to beauty and lovely in its symmetry, it is, in the builder's plan,

a vital part of the holy edifice. Our first step from the common thoroughfare is made over the porch. Entering the temple consecrated to God, shutting out the world's glare and our own petty ambitions, we find a sanctuary. We love the church porch.

Radiant are the memories of this place of shade. Here, on Sabbath days, we greeted friends and won the smile of recognition. There were kind words and good wishes—in subdued tones, as became those who might else disturb the silence of worshipers already within the fane. The porch induced awe and taught the discipline of calm. Tho stone or wood were silent, its form taught us to keep our feet—there is fine

art in that—when we entered the house of God, making us ready to hear. "The preparation of the heart in man and the answer of the tongue is from the Lord."

It seems almost a parable of our own lives, that, fronting the four-fold literary edifice of the gospels, which enshrine the life of Jesus, the son of joy, are three porticos. Varied are the types of mind and fascinatingly diverse is the art of the builders—the four evangelists. One, Matthew, gospeler to the Hebrews especially, carries the genealogy of Jesus, the King of Israel, back to David and Abraham. Luke, in the gospel for all humanity, directs us to Adam, father of the whole race and the son of God.

John, the aged Christian apostle, who knew so well his Master, opens the veil of eternity to greet him who was in the beginning with God—the eternal Word. The three civilizations and tongues that met over the Cross—symbol of the world's harmony, to be wrought by its sin-bearer—are represented in the three stately porticos of Matthew, Mark and Luke, but it is John, who, besides bringing our Master nearer to us in his heart-talks, opens the longer vista of eternity. Thus does he show us the background of our own rejoicing.

Our heredity is from God. We become conscious sons by adoption, when the spirit, sent of Divine Love into our hearts, prompts the

cry, "Abba Father." Our birthright is made surety to us by the elder brother himself, who joyed in his human birth, nature and inheritance and bade us fulfil his joy.

Yet like us, Jesus did not at once know himself. He came to fulness of self-consciousness like all others to whom flesh and blood means conscious life. He himself taught us the law of development—"first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear." The stages of infancy, childhood and boyhood, he passed "in subjection to his parents." Not until his baptism in the Jordan, was any public manifestation of his son made by the Father. In the Temptation in the wilderness, Jesus learned to know himself fully.

After that triumph he went forth conquering and to conquer. No wonder the poet Milton himself, preferred his epic of victory, "Paradise Regained," to that poem usually deemed his masterpiece, "Paradise Lost." Milton felt the glory of brotherhood, not only in, but with the Christ.

"Kai esmen" (and we are), is the true orient pearl which had always lain in the sea of inspiration, but was recovered to us of the English tongue only by the Revision, which reads, "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the children of God, and we are." As in a phonograph, we hear again the voice of John.

Joyful then, be every remembrance of the day of our birth. Ever happy be its recurrence and gladsome be our hearts in celebration. Public thanksgiving days are good, private thank offering to God is none the less acceptable to Him. Surely, our Father is pleased when we offer the fruit of our lips, rejoicing that He has created us. He challenges us to be joyful, even to joy before him as they that tread the winepress. To Him be the glory of our heredity and inheritance!

Are we born of Christian parents? Then richer is our dower. Who knows but the blood of kings and patriarchs is in us? If so, our nobility constrains us to loyalty in service. Let us wash the feet of

the lowly. Jesus taught that the greatest man is the greatest servant. If not sprung from any royal line —and how brief is the history of every one of them—we have enough to glory in, for are we not of "Adam, which was the son of God?" Our line, then, is longer than that of kings and emperors, who are of yesterday. Which of those in all Europe antedates, by known ancestry, antedates one modern language? Whatever be the ground of our joy, or our rejoicing, let it be as a spur to altruism. Selfishness spells eternal disaster.

"To be saved is simply this,
Salvation from our selfishness."

Jesus shrank not from the cross, for that was the supreme manifesta-

tion of His service to His brethren and the sure path to heavenly glory. "For the joy set before him," he endured.

Did our eyes see the light, first in a Christian land? Let us rejoice with grateful loyalty. What superb opportunities to enter upon life-long service in a land which is itself opportunity! How hands beckon on every side to help! How constant the calls to run to the assistance of the needy! No fertility of soil, no riches in trade, no race traits, no national virtues, or gifts of power—in wealth, safety from enemies, power of armies and navies, splendor of cities, or beauty of landscape—can banish from among us the everyday bereave-

ments, sorrow, loss or sickness, of sad humanity.

Are we sympathetic, sensitive, helpful in our lives? Are our hands, hearts, homes open? Make whatever excuses, explanations, or reservations we may, plead our limitations as we will, there stand before us the eternal figures of the Good Samaritan, the forgiving brother, the shepherd seeking the lost sheep, and the historic speaker of tender forgiveness, alike to the outcast woman and the boasting Peter. Before us is the lover of children, the restorer of hope in the hopeless, the preacher of sweet reasonableness. Jesus himself, consummate literary artist, created these characters in parable for our

imitation; for He himself was all these in one. Let us make our land wholly Christian, for He has taught us how to do it.

Did we meet love's welcome on entering the world? Were our cradle days spent in cleanly, comfortable homes, with faces illuminated with love beaming on us? Did a mother's bosom shelter, warm, nourish us? Did a father's arm hold us? Have our parents' thoughtful love and unremitting care—vicarious for all God's providences—resulted in our soundness in limb and organ, giving us a body rich in all physical delights, making existence in the earthly house of this tabernacle a daily and hourly delight?

Then let us have thought and join hands, to the right housing of the poor, to the rescue of the children from premature and degrading labor, from slaughter through the greed of covetousness. May every birthday be a reconsecration to service. Let us make secure to others, "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." Let us ever, as our eyes enjoy the glorious heavens and landscape, and as we "lift to heaven an unpresumptuous eye," say, with full hearts, "My Father made them all."

For the gift of life we shall be grateful; for the possession of a spark of the divine, may we reecho to God Tennyson's words from "In Memoriam"—high water mark of

the blended intellect and heart of the nineteenth century—

"Our souls are ours, we know not how,
Our souls are ours to make them thine."

III

THE SCHOOL OF LIFE

III

THE SCHOOL OF LIFE

CAN we remember our initial day at school? Do we recall those whom we first called teachers or fellow pupils? Is the mind's picture clear, of the building, the equipment, of walls or desks, the books, the wherewithal through which we began our mental training?

It may be well to open the portfolio of memory's etchings, to reconstruct the environment of youth, unveil the pictures, see the play of lights and shades in time of girlhood or boyhood. The schoolhouse

on the hillside, or the many-storied and windowed city structure rises in view. We usually date the beginning of our formal education from the first day we remember being within school walls.

We may even seek further for the beginning of that process of turning sight into insight, which we call education. Who was the teacher of teachers for us? Who, but a mother, leads all educators? At her bosom, in her eyes, even before our own were focust, did we begin to learn. From her illuminated face we gained our earliest interpretations. On her eye our gaze was at the beginning fixt. Our first smile was but hers reflected. All initial promptings in us were

from her. A true mother is the teacher of teachers.

The tiny man, the little woman in arms, learns potentially more during the first two years of existence than ever afterward. A mother's face is the primal school. The cradle is a university. As in our whole life's discipline, thereafter, we may or may not recall the subjects studied, or the books used; but our teachers —all who mold or impress us—we never forget. The last word in education is "Know Thyself." None enables us to do that as does a mother.

The education of Jesus, master of the simple life, illustrates this. Could Mary, the young mother, comprehend the full import of the

deliverances of Anna, the prophet, of Simeon, the seer, of the embassy of the Magi, with gifts of gold and spice? Yet as a daughter of Israel she knew well the Law, the Prophets, and the Literature—those three divisions of the Hebrew Bible which our ancestors made into four: Law, History, Poetry, Prophecy. From her Jesus learned first and most of earthly teachers.

The allusions, references and quotations which Jesus made from the Old Testament sound wonderfully as if these had entered deeply into his childish mind. His favorite texts and citations are not at all of the sort that the ancient partizans and professionals made use of. These were lawyers, or masters of

the Torah, the Hebrew law; doctors, powerful in learning; scribes, expert with pen and script; Sadducees, or rationalists; Pharisees, or puritans. To-day, tho these names are obsolete, other men, parasites on real religion, sect-makers, athletes in logic, gladiators in words, and sticklers for things of merely outward import, keep up debate, strife and division; but they do not dwell much on the texts which Jesus loved most and oftenest quoted.

Our Lord gave single events, history in sequence, and celebrated passages amazing illumination and unique interpretation. Nevertheless, those quotations which He chose by preference, seem far distant and different from those framed by his

questioners for controversy. Even to-day, by church champions, these are among the texts in the Bible most neglected. The passages on which Jesus loved to dwell seemed to reissue from the rock of his inmost being, as tho they had been smitten by the wand of His own experience.

Every man of force and originality has his pet vocabulary, his special fund of precedents, stories and references, his own selection of arguments, his own way of putting things. This is less a sign of mental limitations than a proof of individuality. The style is the man. As one ages, his childhood's lessons and impressions become more vivid, while all his life, whether con-

sciously or unconsciously, he is swayed most by what first was photographed on the sensitive plate of his own soul.

Education, with Jesus, as of all who enter into the secret of the Father's love, was lifelong. The child grew up among many teachers. His later years showed what he had been taught most and by what and whom he was instructed. In manhood his confessions, prayers, speeches, teachings, words uttered before enemies, questioners, challengers, judges, lawyers and doctors, revealed the fiber of his mind. What an amazing array of tribunals and inquisitors he had to face! In the sunset hour of life, when dying on the cross, his seven words

uttered are to us as windows. Through them we look into his soul. As man's interior structure of bone, nerve, and organs tells more infalliby than erudition or academic knowledge, his true history and descent, so what Jesus said of himself outweighs in importance all the deliverances of councils or scholars, from the first pope to the last critic. To them let us hearken.

His allusions to the life of children, their games and plays, to the every-day occupations of the housewife and mother, the mechanic, farmer and business man, to the activities of bread making, preparation of food, and of housekeeping reveal both his heart and his powers of seeing. In out-door life, what he

tells us of the tragedies of the air, in the life of the little birds and the war between the hawk and the hen-mother, show how keenly he observed both nature and human vicissitude. He treasured up what, in all its serious or joyful manifestations, his human experience taught him.

Let Jesus talk about birds, flowers and insects, animals, stars, gems and the things of beauty, both perishable and imperishable as he often does, and we know that his Father's creation was lovely to him. He enjoyed it all. Neither the rosy tints of the morning nor the stormy splendors of the sky were lost upon him. Lightning and the flood, tempest and calm, sea and mountain,

delighted his sensitive soul. He lived close to nature's heart, the heart of reality. He spent no night in the great city, except as a prisoner. The free, joyous life in the country, amid glorious scenery, ever drew him into constant communion with his Father and summoned him to gracious activities for the satisfying of human need.

Environment and heredity made the education of Jesus, as it should make ours. Following his example, confining ourselves not exclusively to books or to men, to society or to solitude in nature, but learning from all and using everything, in order to turn sight into insight, we should have a rounded life, terete, and "as the days of a tree." Real-

izing that God gives us all things richly to enjoy, our education should never on earth be reckoned as complete. Alas for those of whom Jesus would say, "Wisdom shall die with you."

The examination of the boy Jesus in the temple was but slight discipline. It was among the least of the proofs of his knowledge and of his willingness to learn. The experiences of life, as they were with him, so with us, are of the Father's purpose to prove us. We may call them trials, temptations even. These examinations of life are the test of one's knowledge. They may be disagreeable, or seem harshly conducted. The pupil, especially the merely formal or unwilling, does

not welcome them. Yet the wise teacher properly makes proof of the student's knowledge, by exactest methods of finding out what is supposed to be known. In our lives sorrow is a strict examiner, opening our eyes to what was not observed before. The raptures of joy often lend us vision. At times rude experiences reduce our knowledge to its lowest terms. It is as the plowing of the subsoil. Yet often out of this freshly-opened ground spring up and blossom rare flowers of joy and beauty.

How inspiring the thought of Jesus as our schoolmate! "Tempted," that is, examined, in all points like ourselves. What this means for the enrichment of life! Are

any friendships we form equal to those of college days? Are schoolmates, whom we really knew, or who knew us, ever forgotten? Jesus was in the same school with ourselves. Henceforth, says he, "I call you friends."

IV

THE HOUSE WE LIVE IN

IV

THE HOUSE WE LIVE IN

THE Wise Man described, in the poetry of prose, the house we live in, with its "windows," "doors," "keepers" and "golden bowl." Jesus spake of the "temple" of his body. In either case it is not a hut or hovel, but a stately mansion, rich in power to give joy and well worthy of care.

It is the favorite saying of speakers who would appeal to feelings that are dominant in the modern young man, that Jesus, in our

age, would be "captain of a baseball team"; that is, rich in physical life. In our day, the manliness of Christ is set forth under the figure of strenuous endeavor. By this, orators rouse the emulation of youth, whose "glory is their strength."

It is indeed true that the utmost of which one is capable is brought forth in contest with what opposes in equal measure—"a foeman worthy of his steel." To decide superiority, to have supremacy made manifest, is one of the deepest passions of the soul. We greet the victor as our leader. The vanquished or discouraged have no following.

The ages of Christian faith have hailed the Son of Man as Captain,

File-leader, Standard-bearer, the Undiscouraged One. Varied as it may be in detail, this ideal of him is the same. It is that of the young and strong, able to bear, suffer, fight and never yield. It is ever the figure of the ransomer, the rescuer, the host-leader, the soldier, that stands preeminent in the world of Christian thought and feeling. In deathless action, fresh for new conquests, he himself says, "Behold, I make all things new."

Happily, there are manifold other ways of expressing one's love to and joy in Jesus than through dogma. For centuries the church rulers have wasted time and weakened life by over-definition; yet, as of old, other proofs of Christian loyalty

are possible. Even in the early morning of faith, before Christianity was public or tolerated, antedating church edifices, cathedrals and universities, adoring love to Christ uttered its joy with pencil and brush. Even before the New Testament Scriptures were penned was this picturing done. Hiding in caves and dens of the earth Christian love lighted her lamp of art. Let us see how those who loved, having no better way of expression, pictured the Savior.

In the catacombs, down under the Eternal City, behold what was depicted on the walls! More eloquently than verbal creeds do these sketches, whether in outline or in tints, reveal the joy of loving

hearts. They tell of actual belief, for they are evidences of what men felt.

Here are rough drawings, vigorous limnings, paintings in colors, of the young, the strong, the brave Christ. As shepherd, pilot, victor in the games, charioteer, athlete—whatever in manhood signifies power, vigor, skill, delight in fulness of life—that is Jesus, the savior of men.

No figure so dominates in all early Christian art and literature as the shepherd. Yet why? What was his life?

It was only the young, strong and brave could guard the defenseless sheep from its enemies. To confront the lion and bear of early

days, to fight the wolf of all times, to be willing to risk, yes, to lay down his life for the sheep, was the shepherd's duty. Could soldier do more? No one, more or better than Jesus himself, wrote in a sentence the life of the true guardian of the flock—"I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep."

Well does Matthew Arnold picture this early band of believers who held to the "Religion of the Good Shepherd."

"The infant church! of love she felt the tide
Stream on her from Lord's yet recent grave,
And then she smiles and in the catacombs

With eye suffused, but heart inspired true
She her Good Shepherd's hasty image drew."

So, in the cradle days of the infant church, that widely-read book, most dear to the Christians, was Hermas, or the Shepherd. Here was depicted the ideal of tenderness, courage, sacrifice. The Shepherd stood for manliness transfigured, even unto that love of which man knows no greater—that "He lay down his life for his friend."

Yes, even before the richness of Christian parable, allegory and biblical symbolism was known to them, these humble folk, warm with new fresh love to their savior, exprest

their deepest feelings in words and images most already familiar to them. All that was purest in classic Greek or Roman lore was borrowed. The Christ of wholesome and vigorous life was etched and limned. It is ever the figure of the rosy, muscular man, perfect in form, feature and limb, able to do the uttermost, the appointed task, fulfil all labors, rush to the rescue, or strive in battle. In earliest Christian art it is the hero who counts not his life dear unto him, so that he be victor in order to save. Forgetting himself, he saves others.

To these first believers Jesus was no apologist of a lost cause, ascetic, hermit, or discouraged man. In the world yet not of it, He was ever

overcoming. His picture is that of one rich in the joy of life, because of a pure soul in a perfect physical nature.

Only in times of defeat, or when men and women fled from society and the world to be hermits, were the skeletons, cypress trees, skulls and bones, crucifixes, the medieval dance of death and the horrors of Renaissance art, made the emblems thought most appropriate to Christianity. Yet surely these were not in harmony with the spirit of Him who talked so often of things lovely, the marriage feast, the joy of the bridegroom, and made his parables a picture gallery of happy occasions. The symbols of the early church accord best with the mind of Him

who talked so often of the whole body, who gave such fundamental rules for right living, who was himself a healer, and who laid the basis of an infallible science of both whole and holy living.

V

THE JOY OF THE THINKER

V

THE JOY OF THE THINKER

THERE are flowery avenues of emotion through which we may journey in this life, with songs and everlasting joy upon our heads. Yet there are Pilgrim Psalms for the thinker, also.

One may make a devotional use of the old creeds and find growing on the ruins of these mighty structures of logic, or covering the walls of temples still standing in their venerable glory, tho deserted, many a flower as fair as Alpine edelweiss or tropical orchid.

The delights of the thinker, as far surpass those who dwell only in their feelings, as the wheat and poppies excel in color the lichen or the milkweed. Whether as architect of new forms of philosophy, or explorer amid the wonders of the past, the devout man who uses his mind to the glory of God has meat to eat that the average disciple knows not of. Let us ramble with the thinkers and enter into their joy.

The truth of being reconciled, made at one with God, lies at the heart of all the creeds.

When the Greek Church fathers began to ponder and interpret the facts of that wonderful life lived under Syrian skies, in order to set them in logical shape, so as to make

of them doctrine and creed, what figures did they seize upon to illustrate the reality of divine, eternal love?

That life in Syria, unique in all history, furnished the raw material for foundation, walls, buttress, and soaring spire of the rising cathedral of Christian doctrine; but it did more. It threw a searchlight over the whole landscape of Hebrew history; yea, of humanity's life. It revealed the meaning of altar, sacrifice and sense of sin, the agony of the smitten conscience, of the cry *de profundis,* of the hungry heart for the living God. How should the thinker shape the quarried stone, chisel the marble and set the gold and gems of Scripture truth to sat-

isfy the intellect? How should emotion be touched, imagination be kindled, and thus the will be made strong to act?

Let us survey the work of these builders of the great theories of the atonement—the reconciliation of rebellious man to the loving Father.

We glance only at themes on which mighty tomes have been written.

(*a*) The Military or Soldier Theory—oldest of all, most picturesque and richest in poetry and metaphor—is illustrated from Genesis to Revelation. The rescuer, the unbinder of the captive, the deliverer, the wrestler, Israel—victor with God, the avenger of blood, the warlike smiter of kings and the humbler

of God's enemies are types of Christ, as Invincible champion, Deliverer and Captain. Rich is the imagery of the Old Testament, but it finds fulfilment in the matchless life as pictured by the four evangelists. The apostles, in their letters, limn this theory of the rescuing Christ against the background of the Roman world. On the cartoons of the Revelation it has all the color and glow of jewels and tapestry. Heaven is "opened and behold a white horse, and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True . . . on his head are many diadems . . . and the armies that are in Heaven followed him upon white horses clothed in fine linen, white and pure . . .

King of Kings and Lord of Lords." When the books of inspiration close ten thousand hymns of the Church express Christian loyalty to him as the Son of God who goes forth to war.

(*b*) But war is the exception, not the rule of life which is higher than that of the savage. The Ransom Theory, that would explain the cross, pictures the Messiah in terms of civil law. Negotiation, purchase, redemption, take the place of battle and rescue. It is as noble in spirit as the soldier's and often as heavy a tax upon courage as armed struggle, when one must act as redeemer, make sacrifice to ransom the captive, or buy back the slave. Sin is a debt, man is a debtor.

Only the Son of Man can loose the bond. Gold and silver can not do this. "None of them [rich men] can by any means redeem his brother, or give to God a ransom for him." But Jesus is able to pay the price. The soul in joyful assurance of faith knows this. "I will sing of my Redeemer" is one of its thousand songs in the Church's treasury of praise.

Based on actual fact and usage in society, this method of comprehending God's infinite love and man's deepest need rose out of the intellect of the Church, fed the mind and pacified the heart. Through the telescope of theology, a firmament of worlds hitherto unseen was made visible. Out of a dark night

of despair, hymns of devout poets blossomed like stars. As fair as the matchless cathedrals of the middle ages is its medieval miracle of song. With heart and voice we sing these triumphal odes of the redeemed.

Yet there is law other than civil. Alas for human iniquity! The criminal is ever with us. All glory to the divine justice! "Law, which hath her seat in the bosom of God" holds the universe together.

(*c*) Before writing, books, or codes, and antedating temples under any roof but heaven, our brothers responded to the voice within, that charges man with guilt. Behold the smoking altars, the oblations, the victims offered to avert

avenging justice. "Propitiation" and substitution" were the words. Old Testament history, ritual, prophecy and poetry are full of these ideas. The Epistle to the Hebrews is saturated with the images and language of the altar.

Anselm, in medieval days, asking "Why did God become man?" restored the doctrine and cleansed it of pagan notions. Later on, in clearer outline and refined into more spiritual beauty, it bursts forth in the creeds of the Reformation, whose key word is "satisfaction."

"Who, with his precious blood hath fully satisfied for all my sins" —is the adoring tribute to Jesus, forming the first answer in that great manual of Christian faith,

love and experience—the Heidelberg Catechism. A thousand glorious hymns, shining in history and rich in memory's perfume, sing of Christ as our "substitute." "He bore that cross for me"; for "Christ the heavenly lamb takes all our guilt away," cry the poets, who voice their hearts and ours.

How we honor the voluntary substitute! To stand in place of the condemned; in danger or battle, to receive in one's breast the fatal shot, or thrust intended for one's leader; on a sinking ship to give place, as on the *Titanic,* to one weaker; and, more than all, to bear, as a convict, but not the real criminal, the scaffold's disgrace and shame, even to death—what act

more heroic? "Greater love hath no man than this."

"This shows, methinks, God's plan
And measure of a stalwart man."
"Hail Jesus our substitute!" "O, sacred victim slain for man!"

(*d*) There are other views of the work of the Hero, who in our behalf flinched not from the cross. Over these theories, mighty men of intellect have crost swords of controversy. Grotius—the father of international law, modern teacher of a world-conscience, true ancestor of the Hague Peace Conferences, on whose grave, at Delft, Americans, at the first world's disarmament congress, gladly laid the gilded wreath in recognition of his

work for humanity—taught "the governmental theory," which modified abuses of the "substitution" doctrine. How well we know, how deeply have we felt, that, for the sake of Christ's perfect obedience to the law as sin-bearer, hero, leader of men, we are forgiven.

(*e*) Again, the thoughts of men, leaving the altar and its language and images out of their ken, pass beyond the idea of sacrifice or substitution, which modern custom and law, while retaining the old spirit, do not allow in practise.

Holding this view, many men of our age believe that they appreciate more fully the infinite love of the Father and the compassion of Jesus by seeing him, both by the wayside

and on the cross, suffering with us in all our woes. Unfathomable are his sympathy, his friendship, his pity and his love.

By his living and dying, our Comrade is Witness-Bearer to the Truth, Fulfiller of All Righteousness, Man of Sorrows made perfect through suffering. By living, personal power he touches the spring of motive and draws all men to him. The example of our Rescuer, Redeemer, Substitute, God's obedient Son, Vindicator of Holiness and Liver of it, Satisfier of God's justice and Overcomer of our hard rebellious hearts—Our Lover, who laid down his life for us, is but one —Jesus. Yea, he is Victor even in overcoming man's guilty fears and

making him hope by showing salvation to the uttermost.

"The pathway to your Father's love
With guilty fears ne'er darken."

Underlying all these representations is Jesus the joy-bringer, who leads many sons into salvation. He suffered in order to give joy.

Delight in a thousand forms may await the seeker of physical pleasures, but surely no intellectual joy equals that of him who reaches the meaning of the cross. To read aright the mystic cipher in the prophet's message—"He shall see of the travail of his soul and shall be satisfied," to learn by thought and a life of love the secret of Jesus' willing acceptance of the cross and

its agony, is the thinker's rapture. One can understand the martyr's *elan* in the flames, when he sees that like his Master, the sufferer, "for the joy set before him," endured.

VI

JESUS THE STUDENT

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JESUS THE STUDENT

ABOVE all things, Jesus was a student. Our first glimpse of him, during his boyhood life, is of a pupil before his teachers. According to the rules of the time, he is asking and answering questions.

Having reached mature life, we find him again and again inquiring as to a text or passage. "How readest thou?" he asks. Mark the word "How." That means that he is paying close attention to the reading. That he was a good reader

himself, the incident in the synagogue shows clearly. The effect on his hearers was startling. He loved to talk over the ancient narratives and incidents. He wanted the right record and real meaning. He verified his references. He was conscientiously accurate.

Jesus commanded us to "search the Scriptures"; that is, be good Bible students, not content with mere hearsay, lazy listening, or the acceptance of popular tradition. He bids us search, track out, investigate, be sure of our authorities. It is as if he would say, "Satisfy not your soul with the few grains of gold washed down into the lowlands, but go farther up the stream and nearer its source. Seek the

mother-bed in the higher rocks where are the solid lodes of the heavenly wisdom. If necessary, sell all in order to buy."

The real benefit of a student's life and discipline is not merely to read, but to see. At Harvard, Agassiz bade young Shailer study for two months a fish bone, without looking at the books or being told. Great men see things. Agassiz found worlds of thought—God's thoughts, in a fish.

Jesus, even more than a reader, was a seer. He went out into the fields to study for himself. He would have first vision of his Father's wonderful world. Millions of people hear and receive, but very few really see, as they might

and ought. Jesus knew what was in man, but he was at home in God's creation also, because he beheld what was in Nature. He made friends with all living things. He found ever a spring of joy, even when alone, for he had company in what his Father had put on this earth for him and for us to enjoy.

Not only in things tangible did Jesus find happiness. He saw in the books the meaning of the record. He looked into the heart of the writing. What greater joys are there than the scholar's?

The intellectual delight of the student, when in full vision, was his. Beneath the verbal form of law and commandment he discerned God's loving heart. Here, for him,

were not mere tables of stone, but rather a Rock of Ages for the soul's strength, a declaration of love from the Eternal, a proof that man could never drift away from the Infinite Father's love and care.

Every one of the old doctrines, rough and thorny as a hedge to the wrong-doer, were to him as blossoming hawthorne, glorious in beauty and sweet with aroma. Aaron's rod was ever budding to him who saw the beauty of obedience. In his life, joyful duty and eager service made the telescope that resolved distant haze into suns and stars beaming light and love upon his way.

Jesus knew what was in man. He was a student of human nature.

Parchment, scrolls, books—these were but kindergarten blocks compared to the richer volumes marked Heaven, Earth and Man. Jesus studied men, women and children and he read their thoughts. Such knowledge often made him sad. Did he smile? Ah! "he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow." Even the Son of Man was not immune to that penalty. Yet there was joy also in this student's work, for Jesus could see the yearning soul in Zaccheus and the tear of penitence in the outcast woman's soul, yes, even before it outflowed from her eyes. He noted the pure longing of the children when kept back from him. Surely, none could see more beauty in the little ones than he.

What rapture in the discovery of faith in the Syro-Phoenician mother begging for her daughter's life, or the Greeks who would see Jesus. What a eureka in the centurion!

No delight of Archimedes, no eye-gleams of miner, whose pick uncovers ore of gold could excel this joy of Jesus. Human nature, despite all its diseases and weaknesses, and humanity, notwithstanding its sin and wo, were to him as mine, ocean and garden—ever full of sweet surprizes. His feelings were akin to those which fall to the student, as he discerns what was to him unseen or unknown before. As new worlds, swimming into the astronomer's ken, so were the discoveries by Jesus of faith flowering in

unexpected soil, of graces of the spirit, undiscerned even by the disciples, but seen and enjoyed by their Master.

Mastery gained from study means power of discernment and judgment. Discernment is vision and judgment is criticism, and these powers yield the crowning results of mental training. Good judgment is ever worth loads of erudition. To make one's head a mere storehouse of learning is to become as a Hercules, with a hulk of flesh and only a cocoanut's measure of brain-power. Merely gross development of mass in mind or body is worth little and may be harmful.

Above all, Jesus sets us the example of finer strength, with di-

viner knowledge. With a woman, discretion is as a pearl fitly set. One without this power, that comes from good judgment, is as "a jewel of gold in a swine's snout." Without balance, the man of genius is a fool. Life is full of tragedies and of failures, because judgment, critical power to see and discern, is lacking. Poise and balance mean constant joy.

Jesus was the greatest of the critics. Wielding "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God," he discerned between spirit and letter, sheath and bud, text and truth, hearsay and reality. He confounded the men of tradition when they threw at him stale catch questions, such as the seven brothers

and the one wife; of Cæsar's tribute money, as to the one great commandment, and who is my neighbor? Even in the word-battles about *corban* and altar gifts, and filial piety and priests' commands —duties to the temple and to one's parents—or, in the academic dispute as to the Son of David and his Lord, Jesus was victor. He was heard of his Father and given strength because of his filial piety. He delighted to do the will of God. Even while manifesting contempt for men who, by abusing the processes of knowledge, became victims of their professions, Jesus showed us the right way to joy in the true use of our minds.

All professionalism, all routine,

all set ways, all bondage to the rut, the chain, the habit, have their perils. To the rapture of fresh vision, to the joy of victory, to the bold ventures of faith, Jesus ever invites us. The apostle bids us leave the kindergarten of the doctrine of Christ and go into the university—even unto perfection. Those who called him Rabbi—teacher and Master—knew and felt this in him, that he bade us use our minds. He makes heroes out of cowards by requiring them to ask, seek, knock and inquire. He taught manliness in the scholar. He helps us to see the *veritas,* under "the letter's unprolific sheath."

Christian, use your mind! Student, value your privileges! Neg-

lect not library, laboratory, or the resources of Christian civilization. Do not be satisfied with your Sunday-school training in theology. Boldly wrestle with the angels of enlightenment and opportunity. Push into the promised land and fear not to bring back, if God so bids you, even in the face of frowns and curses, a minority report with Caleb and Joshua.

Do you want quick popularity, ease, reward, comfort? Then choose the primrose path and pander to the moment. Do you covet permanent joy, ultimate victory, eternal fame? Then choose some unpopular cause, that has God and everlasting righteousness behind it, and "endure as seeing the invisible."

Jesus is our fellow-student in critical investigation, reverently undertaken. We may indeed fear, as we enter into the cloud, but He will sustain us. He bids us look under the surface of things, challenge traditional notions and wrestle like Jacob. With the right motives, love for truth—which we must speak in love and not in contention—humility, simple piety and self-abnegation, we shall never be hurt in our devout lives, in our childlike faith, or in zeal or service. The Pilgrims were not, when their noble, self-effacing pastor, John Robinson, bade them look for fresh light, to break forth out of the Divine Word. Indeed, the whole 119th Psalm—an alphabetic harmony—teaches us this. It was

the risen Jesus who said, "Behold, I make all things new." In the right use of the mind God's most precious gift, "those that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings as eagles."

Jesus was never harmed by being a student, a critical investigator, a challenger of academic opinion. In his mind there was never any "conflict" or "warfare" between science and religion. He was as much on his guard against priest and Pharisee, as against Herodian and Sadducee, all of whom held truth in fragments and not in orb. Original research into the holy Scriptures never clouded his love to man, or chilled his obedience to his Father.

Scrutiny into the ways of priests never dimmed his perception of his fellowmen's needs. In all this, he was "separate from sinners" and is now "made higher than the heavens."

I confess that fifty years of study and critical investigation have never interfered with warm love to the Master, or chilled simple piety. What have tools and processes to do with passionate love and adoring loyalty? One may be a botanist and enjoy flowers all the more. It is well to submit to analysis all the names of God, as revealed to men, in order to know their meaning. The varieties and shadings of thought, in many languages, are as the facets ground on the diamond of the

Throne of Light. Yet the deepest joy comes when one can say "My Father," and "my dear Savior," and sing "Crown him with many crowns." The grandest diadem which the soul places on the Crucified is the heart's outcry, "My Lord and My God."

Fellow students, let us fulfil the joy of Jesus who read, studied and reflected, never allowing war between heart and intellect, because he saw the truth in full, not in part. He laid his wo upon all who would suppress knowledge. He believed, as the prophet did, that God loves us to ask questions, even as Jesus himself did. "Ask of me of things to come . . . concerning the work of my hands, command ye

me," says our Father through the prophet.

"Let knowledge grow from more to more,
But more of reverence in us dwell,
That mind and soul according well
May make one music as before,
But vaster."

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